

Message Text

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ACTION EB-11

INFO OCT-01 EA-11 ISO-00 CAB-09 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00

INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 FAA-00 SS-15 NSC-10 L-03 H-03

PM-07 PA-03 PRS-01 USIA-15 DOTE-00 SPC-03 TRSE-00

DRC-01 /104 W

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R 251000Z SEP 73

FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8213

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: ETRN, RP

SUBJECT: CIVAIR: GOP "HOMCOMING" TRAVEL POLICY

REF: STATE 187558

1. SUMMARY: EMBASSY HAS DISCUSSED HOMECOMING FARE PROBLEM WITH TOURISM SECRETARY AND CAB CHAIRMAN ASPIRAS AND WITH AMB ROMUALDEZ WHO VISITING MANILA BRIEFLY. ASPIRAS APPEARED TO CONSIDER \$425 FARE A CLOSED MATTER SINCE PRESIDENT MARCOS IS PUBLICLY COMMITTED TO IT, AND INDICATED GOP READY GO FORWARD WITH SUBSIDY SCHEME FOR AMOUNT TRAVELLERS MUST PAY OVER \$425. ROMUALDEZ SAID HE HAD OPPOSED GOP APPROACH TO PROGRAM IN FIRST INSTANCE AND FOLLOWING US CAB ACTION HAD RECOMMENDED TO PRESIDENT A COMPROMISE WHICH WOULD OPEN FARE TO US CARRIERS. HE CRITICIZED GOP HANDLING OF FARE PROPOSAL, AND SAID HE HOPES TO HAVE FURTHER WORD FROM PALACE BEFORE LEAVING FOR WASHINGTON SEPT 28. END SUMMARY.

2. ECON/COMMERICAL COUNSELOR CALLED ON SEC. ASPIRAS SEPT 25 TO DISCUSS HOMECOMING FARE PROBLEM PER REFTEL, LEAVING TALKING PAPER STATING USG AGENCIES ARE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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KEENLY AWARE OF IMPORTANCE TO GOP OF HOMECOMING PROGRAM

AND ARE FULLY PREPARED TO EXPLORE WAYS IN WHICH A SPECIAL FARE CONCEPT CAN BE MADE CONFORMANT TO US POLICIES. ASPIRAS INDICATED HE FEELS PRESIDENT MARCOS COULD NOT BACK DOWN FROM PUBLICLY ANNOUNCED \$425 FARE FOR FILIPINO NON-RESIDENTS AND FURNISHED TEXT OF PRESIDENTIAL MEMORANDUM (BELIEVED RELEASED AFTER US CAB SEPT 17 RULING) DIRECTING GOP AGENCIES TO WORK OUT WITH PAL A CREDIT OR SUBSIDY ARRANGEMENT THROUGH A "HOMECOMING CERTIFICATE" SCHEME (TEXT REPORTED SEPT 17). ACCORDING TO PANAM MANAGER, SUBSIDY SCHEME IS NOW IN EFFECT FOR SALE OF PAL TICKETS IN US.

2. ASPIRAS SEVERELY CRITICIZED "INSINUATIONS" OF US CARRIERS' COMPLAINTS (PRESUMABLY REFERENCE TO PANAM DOCUMENT OF SEPT 4) WHICH ACCORDING TO ASPIRAS QUESTIONED PRESIDENT'S RIGHT TO SEEK HOMECOMING FARE. HE DID NOT EXCLUDE POSSIBILITY OF REACHING A COMPROMISE ON A HIGHER HOMECOMING FARE IN WHICH US CARRIERS WOULD PARTICIPATE, BUT HE MADE CLEAR HE WOULD BE UNLIKELY TO TAKE AN INITIATIVE TO THAT END.

4. LATEST FIGURES, ACCORDING TO ASPIRAS, INDICATE 24,000 FILIPINOS HAD REGISTERED WITH PHIL CONSULATES AND EMBASSIES FOR PARTICIPATION IN HOMECOMING PROGRAM. HE SAID HE IS RECEIVING URGENT REQUESTS FOR APPROVAL OF ADDITIONAL CHARTERS AND HE WOULD APPROVE "EVERY CHARTER" APPLICATION IN ORDER MEET NEEDS OF HOMECOMING TRAVELERS. HE SAID RATES AS LOW AS \$325 ARE BEING CHARGED.

5. IN SUBSEQUENT CONVERSATION WITH AMB ROMUALDEZ, COUNSELOR FOUND MORE FORTHCOMING ATTITUDE AND READINESS TO EXPLORE POSSIBILITIES OF ADJUSTING PAL FILING TO MEET PROBLEMS OF US CARRIERS AND US CAB. ROMUALDEZ SAID HE HAD PLACED RECOMMENDATION TO THIS EFFECT BEFORE PRESIDENT AND HOPED TO HAVE WORD BY SEPT 27, DAY BEFORE AMB LEAVES FOR US. COPY OF TALKING PAPER LEFT WITH ROMUALDEZ WHO SAID IT WOULD BE BROUGHT TO ATTENTION OF PRESIDENT. SULLIVAN

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